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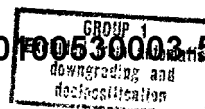
MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Basic and Geographic Intelligence
THROUGH : Chief, Geography Division/OBGI
SUBJECT : Meeting of the Biomedical Intelligence Subcommittee
to Discuss the Desert Locust Threat

1. The second meeting of the Biomedical Intelligence Subcommittee's ad hoc Desert Locust Group met on 11 July to hear a report on the desert locust situation by George E. Cavin, a USDA entomologist recently returned from an assignment as consultant on locusts to the Government of Ethiopia and the Desert Locust Control Organization of East Africa. [REDACTED] Chief, OSI/LSD, chaired the meeting. Representatives were present from State, AID, Air Force, and DIA. The Agency was represented by personnel from OSI, OCI, OER, and OBGI. 25X1A

2. Mr. Cavin indicated that a typical plague build-up situation now exists. Swarms of locusts have been reported and weather is favorable in three areas that historically generate plagues - West Africa, northeast Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, and the India-Pakistan area. Massive control efforts are a year or two late to reduce locust swarms to recession year proportions. Serious crop damage has not yet occurred and there is a good chance that it can be prevented this year. However, concentrated control efforts should be undertaken this summer and continued to keep the situation from getting completely out of hand. Present conditions are not as critical as they were when help was requested from the United States in 1952 because at that time the plague was in full swing and several areas had already suffered serious crop damage.

3. Little information is available from French oriented areas of West Africa. The locust breeding areas are extensive and relatively inaccessible but it is probable that French supported control efforts will prevent serious crop damage for the present. If, however, the large locust population is not knocked down this summer, swarms of locusts are likely to move into North Africa and East Africa later in the year.

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4. Pakistan and India are better prepared to control the present locust population than most other countries. At the present level of infestation, they can prevent the outbreak from reaching serious proportions.

5. The inaccessibility of dangerously large hopper infestations presents a serious situation in Ethiopia. Control teams have not been able to operate along the Eritrean coast because of the unchecked dissident activity of the National Liberation Front. In the highlands of northern Ethiopia bands of hoppers are reaching maturity in isolated, steep-sided canyons that cannot be effectively sprayed from either aircraft or vehicles. In both Eritrea and the highland area, control measures must wait until the locusts reach the flying stage and move from their present locations. The locusts now swarming in northeastern Africa hatched in Africa: and, as yet, locusts have not flown in from the Arabian Peninsula.

6. Saudi Arabia is a critical area in the present build-up of the locust population. Unusually heavy rainfall has permitted breeding of three generations of locusts instead of the customary single generation. No disease or parasites have been found to slow the reproduction of locusts over thousands of square miles of infested area. An experienced British entomologist commented to Mr. Cavin that conditions in Saudi Arabia are now as bad or worse than he has ever observed. Unless swarming locusts in Saudi Arabia are controlled, adjacent countries of the Middle East and Africa will probably be hit with massive invasions of locusts later this year. The situation in Saudi Arabia is probably already out of hand but the government, for political reasons, has refused offers of help from Egypt and Iraq.

7. The United States provided a grant of \$200,000 in June 1968 in support of the program of the Desert Locust Control Organization of East Africa. Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia may request entomologists, aircraft, insecticides, and grants for locust control in the coming months, but until the United States is invited to participate, no action can be taken to avert the potentially serious outbreak.

8. The U. S. Air Force Forces, Strike Command, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, has approached the Department of Agriculture for advice on equipment and personnel in the event the United States undertakes desert locust control operations. The Department of Agriculture is compiling a roster of entomologists available for TDY overseas assignment and, if requests are received, it is anticipated that an adequate number of trained personnel will be available on short notice.

9. A report summarizing the findings of the BMIS ad hoc Desert Locust Group is being prepared by personnel in the Life Science Division, OSI. The format and content of the report have not been fixed. It is

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anticipated that OBGI will be asked to assist in preparation of the text and graphics.

10. An item summarizing the desert locust problem as presented at the 11 July meeting is being prepared by OCI for the C.I.B. of 15 July.

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Acting Chief
Near East/Africa Branch, OBGI

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